



Department of State

TELEGRAM

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ORIGIN SS-45

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Cable Secretariat routing:

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FILE-1, CS/RF-2, DCI (orig)-

D/DCI-3, DDP-4, SDO-5, D/OCI-6

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

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EXDIS

SUBJ SYMINGTON TRANSCRIPT: REFERENCES TO PHOU PHA THI

1. WE HAVE MAINTAINED CLASSIFICATION ALL REFERENCES PHOU PHA THI. THERE IS NOW MORE PRESSURE TO DECLASSIFY EXCEPT FOR TECHNICAL DETAILS. ADVANTAGE OF DECLASSIFICATION WOULD BE AVOIDING LONG DRAWNOUT DISCUSSION OF MATTER WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN SURFACED IN THE PRESS. 2. BEFORE MAKING THIS DECISION, WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR VIEWS ON SOUVANNA'S PROBABLE REACTION AT THIS POINT IN TIME.

3. SOUVANNA AGREED TO INSTALLATION OF THIS SITE IN 1966. SENSITIVITY OF SUBJECT ATTACHED TO ITS USE BY AIRCRAFT BOMBING NORTH VIETNAM.

IN AUTHORIZING INSTALLATION, SOUVANNA SAID THAT IF NVN ALLEGED EXISTENCE OF SITE HE WOULD TAKE POSITION THAT HE WAS UNAWARE OF ANY SUCH INSTALLATION. IF SITE WERE COMPROMISED FURTHER AND AMERICANS CAPTURED HE WOULD TAKE POSITION THAT THESE PEOPLE WERE THERE WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE. U.S. ACCEPTED THESE CONDITIONS AND IT WAS ON THE BASIS OF THAT UNDERSTANDING THAT SITE WAS ESTABLISHED. IT WAS OVER-RUN IN MARCH 1968.

4. MUCH HAS HAPPENED SINCE 1966 WITH U.S. AIR ACTIVITIES BEING



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DISCLOSED IN GREATER AND GREATER DETAIL. EVEN THOUGH SITUATION HAS CHANGED TO DEGREE THAT MAY NULLIFY SOUVANNA'S 1966 CONCERNS FOR ALL PRATICAL PURPOSES, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD HAVE A READING OF HIS PROBABLE REACTION SHOULD WE NOW DECIDE TO DISCLOSE IN THE TRANSCRIPT THAT SITE WAS IN FACT ESTABLISH AND USED. THIS SHOULD INCLUDE YOUR BEST ESTIMATE OF PUBLIC POSITION HE WILL TAKE.
ROGERS

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